

ABOUT GROWTH

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION ABOUT GROWTH MANAGEMENT

FALL 2002



Providing financial and technical resources to build livable and sustainable communities

Contents

Celebrating growth management successes	2
Housing Washington 2002	2
Annual report, updated brochure offer growth management details	2
Everett's up-front environmental review a success	3
King County achieving remarkable results with growth management planning	4
Historic preservation key to visioning, downtown revitalization efforts	5
School impact fees: Growing schools and growing communities	6
A planning commissioner's perspective	7
Chelan County now up to speed with growth management	8

Growth management a valuable tool for economic planning

By Bob Moser

Commissioner, Port of Vancouver, USA and
President, Washington Public Ports Association

In tough economic times, creating the conditions for job growth is of critical importance. The Growth Management Act (GMA) has become a valuable tool for Washington's public port districts in helping form the vision necessary to plan for the impact of that growth.

As a commissioner for the Port of Vancouver in Clark County, I see more than ever the need for that planning. Clark County is among the fastest growing counties in the state over the past several years. Residents here want progress, but they also want a balance between economic development and the environment. As a commissioner, I support finding that balance.

Through GMA planning, land for economic development and for sustaining natural areas has been included in local government planning. The Vancouver Lake Lowlands is an example of the environmental planning the act fosters. The port has worked to enhance its existing wetlands by replacing pipe culverts and rebuilding a dike's floodgates.

Land for economic development has also been designated in our community, with much of it on port property. At the Port of Vancouver, future parcels of land are set aside for heavy industrial and industrial park zoning. Several hundred acres of land in five parcels will be developed for industrial, family-wage job growth in the years ahead.

The need for economic development planning has always been the intent of the

[PLEASE SEE PAGE 6](#)



Growth management planning is helping the Port of Vancouver and other public port districts to plan for the impact of growth.

PHOTO / COURTESY OF THE PORT OF VANCOUVER

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Martha Choe, CTED Director

OCD administers the state's Growth Management Act. Its role is to assist and enable local governments to design their own programs to fit local needs and opportunities, consistent with the GMA.

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About Growth features topics that are of high interest and strives to reflect a wide range of views from various perspectives. The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily OCD's opinions or positions.

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Celebrating growth management successes



By Leonard Bauer, AICP
Managing Director, Growth
Management Services, OCD

As a planner with local government for 14 years, I have had the opportunity to work with communities as they have developed a vision for the future and taken the difficult steps needed to carry out that vision. Growth management planning provides a powerful framework for communities to use to become the livable, workable places that they want to be.

In this issue of *About Growth*, we have asked community members and elected officials to share some of the results their communities have achieved through growth management planning. As most local governments will be reviewing and updating their comprehensive plans over the next few years, it is a good time to celebrate the goals they have achieved. Based on this review, communities will either adjust their growth management strategies for the next seven years or confirm the strategies they had previously adopted.

The GMA was adopted 12 years ago to help and encourage all Washington communities to take the time for reflection and strategic planning. It established 13 broad goals (later amended to 14) and created a process for cities and counties to lead their communities in discussing and planning for how they would strive to reach those goals.

Nearly all cities and counties required to undertake growth management planning have completed comprehensive plans that articulate their specific goals and strategies for managing growth and development. Most adopted these plans in the mid-1990s and have been taking actions to carry out those plans for several years.

Benefits are being seen from growth management planning throughout Washington.

In this issue, King County Executive Ron Sims, Boeing Civic Affairs Manager Dirk H. Fieldcamp Jr., Washington Public Ports Association President Bob Moser, and others describe GMA successes. (See pages 4, 3, and 1 respectively.)

As we prepared for this issue, just a few phone calls yielded the names of numerous citizens, business leaders, elected officials, and planning commissioners who wanted to share the successes of growth management planning in their communities. We regret that only a few can be included in this newsletter. However, we would like to share more of these viewpoints in future issues of *About Growth*. Please e-mail *About Growth* editor Rita R. Robison at ritar@cted.wa.gov to let us know of elected officials, citizens, and other community leaders who we could contact to share their perspective.

Housing Washington 2002

October 30 to November 1 are the dates for this year's housing conference at the Hilton Seattle Airport Hotel across from Sea-Tac International Airport.

For more information, call 1-800-767-HOME or see www.wshfc.org/conf.

Annual report, updated brochure offer growth management details

The *Growth Management Services Annual Report: July 1, 2000 to June 30, 2001* is now available. The report summarizes OCD's growth management technical assistance at the state level.

The growth management brochure, *The Washington State Growth Management Act: An Overview*, has been updated. It describes local and state growth management requirements.

For copies, e-mail cynthiar@cted.wa.gov or call 360-725-3000.

Everett's up-front environmental review a success

By Dirk H. Fieldcamp Jr.
Civic Affairs Manager, The Boeing Company

Does Washington's GMA create a positive or negative impact on communities in the state? From this writer's perspective, at least one portion of the law has had a very positive effect.

The City of Everett's new Planned Action Ordinance has streamlined the permitting process: faster processing of permit applications, quicker approvals, and shorter construction times. This adds up to cost savings for the applicant, good projects for the city and affected neighborhoods, and positive economic growth. All of this is accomplished while protecting the environment and quality of life residents cherish and strive to maintain.

In 1997 Everett took advantage of a \$265,000 grant from the state Office of Community Development (OCD) to be a pilot jurisdiction for a special plan, called a subarea plan, for the city's southwest industrial area. The subarea plan features a new tool – planned actions – authorized by the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). Planned actions are used in growth management subarea planning to provide up-front environmental review and streamline the local permit process for development.

Everett created the state's first Planned Action Ordinance, funded by this grant and other contributions such as in-kind services. The city used previous studies, including *The Boeing Company 1991 Environmental Impact Statement* for its 777 facility and other environmental studies and data, to complete an environmental analysis of a 4,000-acre subarea in southwest Everett. The process included many community meetings for substantial public input. The whole process was completed in less than

two years and was approved by both the Everett Planning Commission and City Council.

This new ordinance allows any development within this subarea to proceed on a fast track through the permitting process, provided the project falls within the parameters analyzed in the environmental impact statement for the subarea plan and meets the requirements of the Planned Action Ordinance. After consistency with the ordinance has been verified, the applicant can move directly into the permitting process and construction. Because all of the environmental analysis and public hearings were completed in the earlier environmental analysis, no additional SEPA procedures, public hearings, or appeals are required.

The mitigation fees and other mitigation requirements have already been set for this area in the Planned Action Ordinance. For example, mitigation fees for transportation impacts have been established at \$1,006 for every peak-hour trip added to the roads in this subarea. The mitigation fees were established by determining the transportation improvements needed to serve buildout of the subarea and assessing fair-share participation. Similar analysis and mitigation requirements were established to protect critical areas: the streams, wetlands, and steep slopes.

By conducting the environmental analysis at the beginning, establishing the framework for development in the subarea (without additional environmental analysis), and identifying detailed mitigation requirements in a Planned Action Ordinance, the planned action provides predictability and certainty to the applicant. An applicant knows at the outset that a specific project that is consistent with the subarea plan and that complies with all mitigation measures in the Planned Action Ordinance will receive approval.



Food Services of America, a wholesale food distributor, is one of the projects benefiting from Everett's up-front environmental review.

PHOTO / JAN MESTON

King County achieving remarkable results with growth management planning

By Ron Sims
Executive, King County

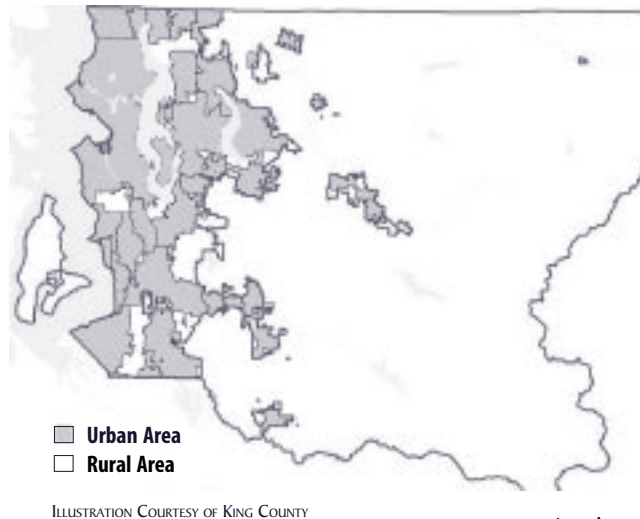
King County is seeing innovative development within its cities today because of the GMA. We have achieved new vibrancy in our downtowns, coupled with protection for our forestlands and agricultural areas.

Washington's GMA is really all about smart growth. Smart growth provides for "common sense" development by encouraging growth where facilities and services already exist, bringing jobs and housing closer, and effectively limiting development into farmlands and low-density rural areas.

Our proudest achievement is containing growth within the county's Urban Area. In 2000, only 4 percent of all of our new housing units went into our designated Rural Area. Stated another way – in 2000, 96 percent of all new development in King County occurred in the Urban Area. We've drastically limited urban sprawl into farmlands and forestlands and have protected our rural resource areas. These areas include fish and wildlife habitat, sources of clean water, and parks and open spaces.

We're also revitalizing our older urban areas as evidenced by the nearly 10 percent growth in the City of Seattle from 1990-2000. Growth in the eight Urban Centers of the close-in suburbs is also rising. Bellevue's Urban Center has grown by nearly 2,600 housing units since 1995. Additionally, over 5,000 housing units were permitted in the other Urban Centers in 2000.

King County achieved these remarkable results by instituting many new and innovative programs, some of which are detailed below.



As a result of growth management planning, nearly all of King County's growth is occurring in the designated Urban Area.

\$250,000 in assessment and cleanup costs and leveraged \$1,625,000 in private

sector investments to enhance redevelopment in these commercial and industrial areas.

- **Transit-oriented development** – Completed a transit-oriented development project in the Overlake area of Redmond that includes: (1) 308 moderate-income housing units; (2) a 4,500 square-foot day-care facility; and (3) a Metro Transit Center and park-and-ride facilities.
- **Senior affordable housing** – Developed in the City of Kenmore, 51 units of affordable housing for senior households with incomes at or below 40 percent of the county median income.
- **Open space preservation** – Approved the Snoqualmie Preservation Initiative that protects Snoqualmie Falls and preserves about 10,000 acres of forestland, view sheds, and trail corridors in and around the City of Snoqualmie.
- **Commercial/industrial redevelopment** – Implemented the Brownfields Program that assists local industrial and commercial businesses to cleanup and redevelop contaminated properties in the Urban Area. As of 2001 the program saved businesses nearly
- **Improved transit service** – Added almost 575,000 transit-service hours over the next six years for King County Metro Transit to greatly improve the bus system within the Urban Area. Last year, we exceeded 100 million annual riders for the first time.
- **Transfer of Development Rights Rural Preservation Program** – The program preserves rural areas permanently, while shifting densities to cities. Thus far, the TDR "Bank" has preserved 1,200 acres and acquired 156-development right credits.
- **Land Use/Transportation/Air Quality New Planning Initiative** – As a part of our smart growth plan, we are embarking on a ground-breaking study to not only understand how urban form affects our health, but also to put into place some of these ideas.

Now as we put more emphasis on the livability of our urban areas, we've begun to realize that healthier urban communities result in healthier individuals.

Historic preservation key to visioning, downtown revitalization efforts

By Joan Simpson
Mayor, North Bend

For many years the City of North Bend, Washington, struggled to find its identity. The community was given a chance to focus on this problem when the comprehensive plan was revised in the early 1990s to comply with growth management mandates.

The plan champions rural character and sense of place. The accompanying vision statement identifies the community's clear mandate of preserving "rural character, natural beauty, and small town scale."

But how could a small community located at the boundaries of Puget Sound's expanding metropolis implement "rural character," produce a thriving economy, and support the historic assets that have been long-neglected in the downtown core? The answer is a commitment to a historic preservation "roadmap" to revitalize the downtown area. The community found its roots.

The history of North Bend is tied to its strategic location as a gateway between Puget Sound and the Cascade Mountains. Transportation routes – early foot trails, wagon roads, railroads, and eventually highways – have shaped the city's physical growth and its economy. The downtown and Interstate-90 interchange areas reflect the community's long-time role as service provider to the traveler. In 1978, I-90 bypassed the downtown area a half-mile to the south. As a result, downtown business floundered and gas stations, restaurants, and motels went out of business. The downtown merchants experimented with an alpine facade theme, ala Leavenworth. It did not work.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, rapid growth was knocking at North Bend's front door and business activity became more and more concentrated near the interstate. Downtown North Bend was left to re-invent itself once again as an attraction worth a detour from the

fast-food restaurants and gas stations at the interchange.

The more North Bend looked at itself and at its history, the more compelling it was to be that rural town, to be authentic North Bend. In the mid-1990s downtown revitalization and historic preservation became top priorities for the city. An Economic Development Commission was appointed and a historic district designated. The city entered into an interlocal agreement with King County Landmarks and Heritage Program to obtain professional expertise. A Facade Assistance Program and a minimum maintenance ordinance were adopted.

The city earmarked 30 percent of revenues derived from an interchange development to act as a catalyst for small beautification projects, parking lots, and paving improvements. With technical expertise for facade programs, six properties were awarded grants from the city to help renovate historic buildings. Public investment of approximately \$450,000 fostered private investment of about \$5 million. From 1998 to 2002, the downtown area has shown an approximate 27 percent increase in gross receipts.

The City of North Bend has embraced the 13th GMA planning goal – historic preservation – by identifying and preserving lands, sites, and structures that have historical and archeological significance. In addition to the designation of the downtown historic district, the city acquired two contiguous historic farms totaling more than 800 acres. The city is working with the adjoining city and county partners and is vigorously preserving rural character. By focusing on our strengths, rural character, the natural beauty, and the small town scale, we've found our identity. We like our rural roots.



North Bend's historic preservation efforts, such as restoring the McGrath Hotel, are drawing visitors to the city.

OCD PHOTO / RITA R. ROBISON

School impact fees:

Growing schools and growing communities

By Denise Stiffarm and Grace Yuan
Attorneys, Preston Gates & Ellis, LLP

Counties, cities, and towns planning under the GMA are authorized to assess impact fees on behalf of school districts. In those jurisdictions where a school impact fee ordinance has been implemented, school districts have been able to increase capacity to meet growth needs without shifting the full costs to existing taxpayers. In other words, the collection and use of school impact fees under the GMA has proved to further the objective of growth helping to pay for growth.

The impact fee statute reflects a balanced approach to funding capacity needs in a growing community. Impact fees may be imposed for "system improvements" that are "reasonably related to the new development" and that will "reasonably benefit" the new development. This protects new development from paying to correct deficiencies in existing facilities. In addition, public funds must be used to fund at least a portion of the system improvements needed to serve new development.

The impact fee statute enables local jurisdictions to use past experiences and current data to determine the appropriate share of the cost of public facilities that should be covered by impact fees.

Generally, a formula is used to calculate the costs to serve students expected from each new dwelling unit, with adjustments made for other payments made by new development for particular system improvements (through user fees, taxes, or similar payments) and for other means of funding the improvements (such as state funding). These parameters further the GMA's emphasis on local

responsibility and control over the growth process.

Combining the standardized procedures with specific local needs results in a school impact fee that directly reflects the growth needs of a particular school district. Thus, the fees will vary from district to district.

For example, the current school impact fee for a single-family home in the Battle Ground School District in Clark County is \$1,400, while the Snoqualmie Valley School District in King County has a fee of \$3,520. In Pierce County, the county council has made a policy decision to cap all single-family school impact fees at \$1,645.

School impact fee ordinances have been implemented for school districts in many counties throughout Western Washington, including Clark, King, Kitsap, Pierce, Skagit, and Snohomish. Within those

counties, 32 cities and towns have also implemented GMA school impact fee ordinances.

In King County, one of the first jurisdictions to implement a GMA-based school impact fee ordinance, \$47,081,054 in fees have been collected since 1991. Of that amount, school districts have spent approximately \$35,194,207 on system improvements to serve new growth.

The King County data confirm that school impact fees are an effective tool for ensuring smart growth and stable community schools. Impact fees enable school districts to ensure that school facilities will be adequate to serve new development, without requiring existing taxpayers to absorb the full costs of new growth.

Denise Stiffarm and Grace Yuan are members of the Municipal Department at the Preston Gates & Ellis office in Seattle.

GMA a valuable tool for economic planning

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

GMA. When it was passed in 1990, local governments had the option of including that planning in a separate chapter of the comprehensive plan or throughout the plan. It wasn't until this last legislative session that the act was amended to make that economic development chapter a requirement, if state funding is provided. This change will help in establishing the consistency required when preparing the basic road, water, and sewer services required for companies to bring family-wage jobs to areas across our state.

As president of the Washington Public Ports Association, I see close-up the need for such planning. It is vital for port districts to be able to peer into the future and with some reliability be able to plan carefully for

the placement of infrastructure. The GMA serves to assist port districts in moving toward that future.

Without such planning, site selection for companies would become much more difficult, if not impossible. Demands for basic infrastructure would have local governments, like ports, making major investments that – without the GMA – might be used only for the short term.

Consistency in planning with an eye toward future growth is absolutely needed if we are to help Washington state stimulate economic development. Incorporating an economic development strategy with environmental values is a key step in making sure our citizens get the job opportunities they need, while setting aside lands for future generations. The GMA enables both.

A planning commissioner's perspective

By Paul Perz
Chair, Lacey Planning Commission

As one of the many people who moved to the Puget Sound area during the seventies from the East, I was impressed. The beauty of the land, smallness of Seattle, cleanliness of the waters, vast openness, mountains, and ability to drive 55 mph on Interstate 5 through downtown Seattle without stopping were the lures.

However, something changed. Like Topsy in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* who didn't know how or why she "grewed" up, Puget Sound just grew.

In my efforts to understand and possibly influence the direction of

growth in Thurston County, I naively applied for a position on the Lacey Planning Commission six years ago. Although I'm a county resident, the city allows two urban growth area (UGA) residents to serve. As I began my first term, the GMA was in the toddler stage. As with any toddler, it brought about significant change.

My first year was like a return to the classroom. Concepts such as comp plan, design guidelines, setbacks, pedestrian-oriented, UGA, and drainage design were not why I signed up. Not to mention the homework: at least three hours of reading to prepare for each meeting. Thank goodness for the Planning Short Course provided by OCD in partnership with the Planning Association

of Washington. It helped put into perspective what I really was supposed to be doing.

During my second year, I began to understand something that wasn't part of the short course. It was a product of the GMA and of planning commissioners who preceded me – vision.

I began to understand the zoning patterns. The large, undeveloped areas of the city targeted for commercial or light industrial growth. The need for buffers to either provide transition or protection from one zone to another. The mixture of housing density and the impacts on public transportation routes. The importance of

design review, especially in response to the phenomenal growth of big box stores, which many believe detract from the image of the area.

Since the city didn't have a downtown, I began to appreciate the work of defining the downtown corridor. I began to see why the city enacted ordinances to preserve the natural beauty and resources of the city, such as protecting the creek that runs through the city and limiting the number of trees removed during land development. The creation of business parks and village centers are also a part of that vision.

This was the foundation laid out by my predecessors who took to heart the goals of GMA and established a vision so Lacey wouldn't be like Topsy.

However, the vision established ten years ago faces challenges. Market place demands exert pressures for changes in zoning, design review standards, and buffers. The recent anti-tax initiatives have sent jurisdictions scrambling for a stable tax base. Not only do city council members change with each election, but planning commissioners change frequently. Whose vision are we keeping?

Other challenges include deciding how much planning should be regional; how to enforce city building, road, or design review standards in UGAs; what is the "best available" science; and how to locate secure transitional facilities.

Through all the pressures and challenges, I'm not sure if the original vision for the city will remain. I know that the people who formed the vision and who help maintain it will change. But there is guidance for all that follow. The GMA will be there to ensure that Lacey isn't just another Topsy.



To entice shoppers to stroll along city streets, Lacey's design review guidelines require buildings to be placed next to the sidewalks.

PHOTO / COURTESY OF THE CITY OF LACEY

Chelan County now up to speed with growth management

By Chris Rader

News Reporter for KOHO-FM
in Leavenworth, Washington

After a rocky eight years of controversy in accepting the state GMA, Chelan County now is in full compliance with the act and enjoying the benefits of GMA funding.

During the 1990s, some residents – led by two county commissioners who have since been voted out of office – objected to perceived restrictions on private property rights, and Chelan County petitioned the state Supreme Court over the constitutionality of the GMA. The lawsuit was withdrawn when new commissioners were elected. With new commissioners in office, county residents now have an improved attitude about the benefits of watershed restoration and land use planning.

"I'm excited by what I've seen coming out of Chelan County the last couple of years," said Steve Wells, former assistant director of OCD's Local Government Division. "There's a spirit of problem-solving and a willingness to use growth management tools to solve those problems."

One challenge for the county has been to protect the healthy runs of Chinook salmon and steelhead that inhabit the Wenatchee River system. Thanks to a \$50,000 critical areas grant from OCD and \$175,000



Studying the historic channels of the Wenatchee River and its tributaries is part of Chelan County's salmon recovery efforts.

OCD PHOTO / RITA R. ROBISON

from the Salmon Recovery Board, the county has hired a consultant to conduct a channel migration zone study of the watershed. The consultant is using aerial photographs to analyze the changes the riverbed has made over the past 100 years. By mapping the historic channels of the Wenatchee and its tributaries, researchers can predict in which direction stream bank erosion will likely occur.

These predictions have great value to land use planners, according to Mike Kaputa, director of Chelan County's new Natural Resource Program. Kaputa and a staff of three conduct watershed and salmon recovery planning, working with the U.S. Forest Service and the agricultural

community on restoration projects.

"We're always looking for good habitat sites in the Wenatchee River," he said. "If the river is eroding a tree-lined bank, we'll expect good cover for salmon when the trees fall into the water. The study will show us what areas need to be replanted or where we should create small channels to relieve the pressure where the river is constricted by such factors as the railroad and the highway."

The study of the Wenatchee River system will be completed by June 2003.

A free-lance writer, Chris Rader is a member of the Leavenworth Economic Development Advisory Committee, Upper Wenatchee Valley Heritage Group, Cascade Foothills Farmland Association, and Chelan-Douglas Land Trust.



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